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Some Reflections on *Postmodernity's Transcending from* the Perspective of Modern Philosophy

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Laurence Paul Hemming's book offered me the opportunity to study postmodern theology more closely and to examine the ways in which it wants to make use of pre-modern, modern and post-modern philosophical insights in order better to understand the mystery of faith. Having said this, I found it very difficult to grasp the issues which Hemming addresses in his book not only because of the content – he discusses a wide range of philosophical positions – but also because of his style—he chooses a variety of specific philosophical insights from a great number of philosophers in order to fit them in his own theological scheme. It appears to me that the workings of this scheme remain quite vague.

In order to be able to present some thoughts on Hemming's book from the perspective of modern philosophy, I will start with a short summary of some characteristics of modern philosophy, as given by Heidegger in his well-known essay, *The Age of the World-Picture* because Heidegger's approach to the modern age is congenial to Hemming's and his analysis of modernity is still very influential. I will then relate this characterization of modernity to the seventh chapter of Hemming's book in which he discusses the implications of the concept of the sublime in modernity.

(1) The manner and way in which man is man, that is, himself [...] (2) The essential interpretation of the being of beings. (3) The essential projection of truth. (4) The sense in which, in any given instance, "man is the measure".¹

This means that every age is founded on an understanding of man, of Being, of truth, and of values. In modernity, this metaphysical position has taken a specific shape: man is conceived as a subject which approaches the world as an object, truth has become 'certainty for a representing subject' and values have been reduced to subjective constructions. One of the most visible results of modernity's metaphysical decision is the 'loss of the gods' (*Entgötterung*), or as Hemming calls it, the 'flight of the Gods'.

This expression [the loss of the gods] does not mean the mere elimination of the gods, crude atheism. The loss of the gods is a twofold process. On the one hand, the world picture Christianizes itself inasmuch as the ground of the world is posited as infinite and unconditioned, as the absolute. On the other hand, Christendom reinterprets its Christianity as a world view (the Christian world view) and thus makes itself modern and up to date. The loss of the gods is the condition of indecision about God and the gods. Christianity is chiefly responsible for bringing it about. But the loss of the gods is far from excluding religiosity. Rather, it is on its account that the relation to the gods is transformed into religious experience. When this happens, the gods have fled. The resulting void is filled by the historical and psychological investigation of myth.²

The loss of the gods is a twofold process in which firstly the world picture Christianizes and then Christendom reinterprets its Christianity as a world view. The Christianization of the world picture becomes apparent in what Heidegger refers to elsewhere as the onto-theological structure of metaphysics. Modernity is characterised by a development in philosophy such that the ideal of knowing is oriented to the model of exact science. Mathematics, and subsequently physics, have become the paradigm of all well-founded, certain knowledge and according to this paradigm, philosophy understands Being as ground while thinking gathers itself towards Being as its ground in the manner of giving ground and accounting for the ground.³ Thus, this ground is the ultimate principle on the basis of which the whole of reality can be understood as something radically coherent and transparent. Of course, only God qualifies as this absolute ground and consequently, modern philosophy attributes a central position to Him. Heidegger's analysis of this process brings to light the onto-theological structure of the most prominent metaphysical systems of modernity, particular examples of which would be: Descartes' idea of the infinite; Leibniz's principle of sufficient ground; Spinoza's absolute substance and Hegel's absolute idea.

The second stage in the loss of the gods is that Christendom reinterprets Christianity as a world view. The consequence of this shift is the degradation of

the all-encompassing faith in God and divine worship to a detached view of the world competing with other world views. As the title of his essay already indicates, Heidegger's *The Age of the World Picture* examines the essence of the (modern) world picture. In ordinary (German) parlance, this term has a neutral meaning, referring to some view of or attitude towards the world. But for Heidegger, this term has a very specific and fundamental meaning. He considers the fact that the world has become a picture to be the essence of modernity, which is why, strictly speaking, it is incorrect to contrast the modern world picture with that of the Middle Ages or of Antiquity. The interpretation of the world as a (representational) picture only becomes possible in modernity. What exactly does Heidegger mean by 'world picture'?⁴ Let us take a close look at each element, 'world' and 'picture', separately. Considered philosophically, the word 'world' serves here as a name for beings in their entirety. This term not only includes nature and history, but also the world-ground, no matter how its relation to the world is thought. From the perspective of the Christianization of the world view analyzed above, this means that by conceiving God as giving ground He is included in the sphere of representational thinking which accounts for the ground. As a result of this, He turns into something that can be represented, although His position as the absolute ground of the world is a unique one. When using the word 'picture' we automatically think of a copy of something, a photo or a painting but for Heidegger, 'picture' refers to something more fundamental. When we say that we try to get a picture of something, we implicitly use this word in a normative way.⁵ The picture or representation we make of something thus becomes, as it were, the norm or standard of the thing in itself: the matter itself stands in the way it stands to us, before us. Consequently, making a picture of something or imagining something does not only have to do with visualization but also, and even more basically, with conceptualization. Moreover, this representation is not an arbitrary product but is something present for the mind's eye in all its necessary coherence and totality i.e. as a system. Finally, the term 'world picture' also has the connotation of the world (Being as such) being present and available for a representing subject.

Understood in an essential way, "world picture" does not mean "picture of the world" but, rather, the world grasped as picture. Beings as a whole are now taken in such a way that a Being is first and only is being insofar as it is set in place by representing-producing humanity.⁶

The interpretation of Christianity as a world view is dependent on the world having become a picture for a representing subject. Consequently, the expression 'Christian world view' only has meaning within the context of the (modern) world picture and to some extent may be understood as the conscious, articulated expression of Christianity. 'World view' means that man is conscious of the fact

¹ M. Heidegger, *The Age of the World Picture*. In: Idem, *Off the beaten track*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 70.

⁴ M. Heidegger, *Die Zeit des Weltbildes*, pp. 81ff. [M. Heidegger, *The Age of the World Picture*, pp. 6-61].

that he looks at the world from a certain, in this case Christian, perspective and that he attributes a value, perhaps even the highest value, to his faith. On the basis of this conscious evaluation, he can enter into dialogue or confrontation with other world views and other values but all these world views and the value attributed to them are only possible under the condition that the world as such has already become a picture of which man can make an image or a view. Only against the much larger background of modernity, in which man posits himself for the first time as a subject opposed to the world (as object), is he capable of observing or viewing the world in a self-conscious, detached way, of evaluating it in relation to other world views, etc. Thus, the decisive factor is not so much that in the course of modernity, Christianity has entered into a tense relationship with other religious and non-religious world views but that it has understood itself as a world view at all. When this occurs Christianity has lost its original Christian character.

Why is this so? In its earliest and (in Heidegger's view) most authentic shape, Christian religion is not a world view at all but a way of life, completely dominated by faith. The faithful experience God not only in heaven or simply as the architect of the world or as the highest metaphysical principle (Supreme Being, *causa sui*, etc.) but as the living Father who has entered history in a concrete way and foretells humanity of its salvation. Moreover, faith is not man's initiative or his construction, but something that is bestowed upon him on the basis of the promise made in the Gospels. The faithful believe in God as the one who really acts, who chooses his flock and thus reveals himself as a loving shepherd of his people. This faith is not construed by man; it is received without merit; it is pure grace. However, in the modern age faith becomes a world view and so this all-encompassing religious mode of existence vanishes. Man takes a detached, observing attitude towards the world and assigns to God a place in it as it's first principle. As a consequence of this, it is up to the faithful to consider God and religion to be of (some) importance to life. Religion thus becomes a value which man has to balance against other values (like work, enjoyment, health, etc.). The crucial difference between original, authentic faith and a modern, pious view of the world is that in the former view faith is a human response to God's initiative, whereas in the latter view the human subject is the exclusive point of departure on which his religious view of the world is founded. In this way, the subject can also assure himself of the certainty of faith. In real terms this means that he chooses the world view that fits him best, or construes for himself a new eclectic world view by using elements of the existing ones. Finally, the notion 'place' presupposes an organizing subject, which assigns a position to everything and everyone. The result of this evolution is that religion loses its truth and reality, and turns into a religious experience. Man no longer sees God's activity in the world, but only subjectively feels His presence in the interiority of his heart. Here we see that the well-known opposition between the God of the philosophers and scientists and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is not of decisive importance. The ancient and medieval world view, which is based on the

modern forms of religiosity have lost their authenticity since they have conformed to the premises of the age of the world picture. They all are dominated by the loss of the gods.

On the basis of this analysis, the question arises whether in the age of the world picture, it is even possible to think and to speak about God in a truthful way at all. Heidegger is very pessimistic about the consequences of the loss of the gods: when it has come to this, the gods have fled. As said before, this failing of holy names should certainly not be identified with atheism. Rather, it announces a situation of indecision about the gods; the holy, as the element in which the gods are dwelling; human life completely dominated by God's grace and the experience of a world that constantly reveals God's activity—all these features of an authentic religious existence have vanished and left a great emptiness. Now man himself has to decide whether or not God exists, on the importance of religion to his life, etc. However, just at the moment when he wants to take a decision on these issues, he notices the things on which he has to decide withdraw and escape his controlling power. This is the situation of indecision about God and the gods. In effect it is not man's decision, but it is something that happens to him as destiny, as a consequence of the age of the world picture. At present, man can decide autonomously on many things, almost on everything, but not on the fact *that* he has ended up in this situation.

In this situation of indecision, all thinking about God is both *too late* and *too soon*. We should not understand the statement that our thinking about God is *too late* as a yielding to atheism or agnosticism and even less as indifference with regard to this issue. The indecision about God is not the consequence of a conscious human decision, but the result of a certain understanding of Being which reigns in our age. In its turn, this understanding is the result of a certain destiny of Being (*Seinsgeschick*). Once the gods have fled, man has thrown away his chances to establish an authentic relationship with God; he is too late. For the same reason, our thinking about God is *too soon*. Precisely because the loss of the gods is not the result of a human decision but happens to man as his destiny, every human attempt to put an end to this indecision, perhaps by promoting God and religion again as valuable objects of philosophical inquiry or by stressing again the value of faith in God, is a confirmation and strengthening of the loss of the gods rather than a means of overcoming this loss.

The only thing that man can do in this situation is to prepare the ground for the divinity to manifest itself again. Only if man lives within the boundaries of this ground is he able to understand the original meaning of the word 'God'. In a well-known fragment of his *Letter on Humanism* (*Brief über den Humanismus*), Heidegger goes more deeply into the nature of this ground:

The [sort of] thinking that thinks from the question concerning the truth of Being questions more primordially than metaphysics can. Only from the truth of Being can the essence of the holy be thought. Only from the essence of the holy is the essence of divinity to be thought. Only in the light of the essence of divinity can

With this remark Heidegger indicates how much preparatory work has to be done in order to rediscover the meaning of the word 'God'. In general, he describes this work as the 'overcoming of metaphysics'. This is certainly not a Hegelian sublation, but a step back out of (the reign of) metaphysics into its essence, it moves from accepting metaphysics as a given construction (of which Hegel's system is one of the most prominent examples) to its deconstruction. This step back implies that metaphysical thinking is questioned from the perspective of the truth of Being as a coming-to-pass of unconcealment and concealment. In this way, the construction of metaphysics loses its overwhelming, coercive character and appears as a product of its age, as a manifestation of a specific destiny of Being. As far as the question of a more authentic meaning of the word 'God' is concerned, this thinking does not simply accept the fact of the loss of the gods as the inevitable fate of modern culture. On the contrary, it asks, more fundamentally, which conception of man and world, truth and values has brought this destiny about and why it is able to present itself as something unavoidable? Thus, the fate of the loss of the gods loses its coercive character.

6.2 HEMMING'S ALTERNATIVE TO THE METAPHYSICS OF REPRESENTATION

TATION

Contemporary philosophy can be characterized as an attempt to 'overcome metaphysics' and in particular to overcome the fatal consequences of modernity's understanding of man as a subject, of Being as an object, of truth as representation, and of values as a subjective construction—in short of philosophy as representational thinking. The outcome of this project, which is still in progress, is not only essential for the future of religion and theology, but also more generally for the future of man and world, thinking and acting. Hemming's book is one of many examples of this project.

My comment on Hemming's book is that I agree with the general orientation of his inquiry, viz. the necessity to find new ways to think transcendence and thus to overcome a certain kind of metaphysics. But I do not agree with his general account of modern metaphysics because it is far too monolithic. Many modern philosophers are well aware of the problems raised by the rationality of the Enlightenment in general and its dramatic impact on religion and theology in particular. These philosophers are trying to develop new ways to think transcendence philosophically, and these attempts are worthwhile. So from the perspective of modern philosophy, I would wish to draw attention to these alternatives, not only for the sake of historical correctness but also because some of these answers can be introduced fruitfully into the contemporary philosophical and theological discussion.

In order to point out the risks which both Hemming and I encounter in attempting to deconstruct representational thinking, I refer to Derrida's famous article, *Les fins de l'homme*⁸ because at the end of this text he points out these risks. On the one hand, one can try to deconstruct representational thinking without

switching grounds. In this case (which more or less represents my approach) one takes up what has remained implicit in the original basic issue of a given philosophy in order to divert the instruments and the bricks of it and redeploy them in the building of representational thinking itself. The risk of this approach is that one confirms, consolidates or supersedes on a more fundamental level that which one wanted to deconstruct. This is the risk of my approach. But Hemming's approach is also susceptible to a risk, albeit the opposite one. Derrida warns us about the dangers of deciding to switch grounds abruptly and to pitch one's camp boldly outside the tradition of modern philosophy appealing to an absolute breach and difference. In addition to the other hazards which may threaten such an emigration (viz. that the new territory is more naïve and more restricted), this approach runs the risk of a reduction to the oldest ground. Let us put both my approach and Hemming's approach to representational thinking to the test in order to see whether Derrida's warnings hold true and if so, whether they hold in both cases or in just one.

I will confine myself to Hemming's interpretation of Kant in the seventh chapter of his book. He criticises Kant's theoretical philosophy as an example of the modern philosophy of subjectivity and the metaphysics of representation: for Kant, even the unrepresentable is represented to the subject. In this respect, I want to show that Kant takes a much more balanced attitude with regard to the unrepresentable.

In general, according to Hemming, Kant's theoretical philosophy runs parallel to Descartes' and can be characterized as a philosophy of subjectivity and representational thinking. In the case of Kant, he illustrates this by analysing Kant's notion of the 'inner concept'. Unfortunately, this is not correct: the German term '*Inbegriff*' does not at all mean 'inner concept', neither does it refer to subjective interiority, but simply means the sum total. This means that the conclusions which Hemming draws with regard to the status of the self on the basis of the notion of the inner concept are basically unfounded. More generally, Kant uses every opportunity to stress the differences between his philosophy and Descartes' and this holds true with regard to three elements of the basic metaphysical position analysed above viz. the self or the I, God as the being of beings and truth as representation. For Descartes truth is always true before us, always already true, because it is true first in the mind of God, on this point he follows medieval philosophy. For Kant, however, the ultimate foundation of truth is not God, but the transcendental unity of apperception. Secondly, this transcendental unity is not the same as Descartes' notion of the I as a thinking substance, indeed it is no substance at all but a formal, transcendental condition for our finite, human knowledge. This implies, thirdly, that Kant's position with regard to the metaphysics of representation is not the same as Descartes'; on the contrary, for Kant there remains an unbridgeable gap between appearances, which can be known by the subject, and the thing in itself, which remains unknown.

Let us take a closer look at this unbridgeable gap between appearances and the thing in itself. When Kant thinks of the thing in itself, he primarily refers to the ideas of reason, viz. the I, the world, and God. On the one hand, he explicitly rejects Descartes' interpretation of them: the ideas of reason are surely not '*des idées claires et distinctes*', i.e. realities of the same order as the mathematical realities, as

⁸ Press, 1998, p. 267f.

Hemming erroneously suggests. On the other hand, however, as regulative ideas they are of vital importance to man's knowing, in that they orientate his thinking without him ever being capable of representing them. So, the teleological nature of man's relation to the sublime, his reaching out to a beyond which he cannot represent, is not only characteristic for Kant's third Critique but also characterizes man's relation to God in his theoretical philosophy.

In conclusion, in order to clarify the relation between the knowing subject and his reaching out to a beyond, I will give a short analysis of the famous passage of the preface of the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*: 'I had to supersede knowledge in order to make room for faith.'⁹ Let me try to analyse the key words of this passage. In this context, 'knowledge' means objective, scientific knowing, and comes close to what Hemming calls 'representational knowing'. The most important objective of the Critique of Pure Reason is not only to analyse the conditions under which this kind of knowledge is possible but also to set its limits as clearly as possible. Kant's reasons for doing this are not only negative, i.e. pointing out that a scientific knowledge of the supersensible is impossible, but also positive, i.e. laying bare the domain of the supersensible, to which knowing has no access, but towards which reason nevertheless reaches out. For human reason, the supersensible is a possibility of thinking that is free of contradiction. What are the implications of this for the meaning of the word '*Aufheben*'? First, it is quite obvious that Kant, some twenty years before Hegel, uses this word both in a negative and a positive way. Secondly, and more importantly, the negative aspect of *Aufheben* is subordinate to the positive one, since Kant uses the word '*um*' (in order to) to determine their relationship. Thirdly, the result of the *Aufheben* is not a kind of representative thinking in which all is already present in the mind of God but a reaching out to a beyond of scientific, representative thinking. Finally, for Kant, the word 'faith' does not refer to something irrational, something that is separated from all knowing by an abyss. On the contrary, it is a reasonable faith which implies that the reasonable subject reaches out to a domain that he cannot represent but that is nevertheless of vital importance to his knowing, his acting and his power of judgement. This means that Kant's famous saying 'I had to supersede knowing in order to make room for faith' can be considered as a way to transcend postmodernity.

7

Reply to Jonkers

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It is impossible to read Peter Jonkers' reflection on *Postmodernity's Transcending* without picking up his sense of disappointment and bewilderment about the text. I want to make only a few remarks, perhaps reflecting my own disappointment at his assessment. In the first place he interprets it as a book arising out of faith. This is entirely to miss the central question in the text—which is, when we use the word 'theology', what do we mean by it? Inasmuch as it is written by one who is a believing Christian and who has faith, a driving question in the book is to enquire (p. 33) 'which god is at issue: the God of faith or the God of philosophy?' This unanswered question persists in all postmodernity's explorations of God, no matter who undertakes them.' The book resolutely *never* addresses the question of what it would mean to undertake a theology arising out of faith, while attempting relentlessly to illustrate the disastrous consequences for philosophy arising from philosophy's ontotheological entanglements, and theology's illicit compact with philosophy. The consequences for this are, as the book says, that the believers who synthesised philosophy to the theological requirements of belief:

through a patient redescription of what they successively found in the ancient texts, and with the entirely pious end of conforming philosophy to a higher science – theology, but the theology not of thinking but of faith – they drove forward an interpretation of being they discovered already present in antiquity, and deprived philosophy of its genuine ground, the self-enquiry that prior to Aristotle and Plato the being of being human *is*, replacing this ground with God as the cause of all things. Even when philosophy will declare this god to be dead, philosophy overall remained and remains yet deprived of its ground. (p. 124)

Jonkers overlooks entirely that the book attempts to annul this very drive, first by illustrating it in its effects across the history of thinking itself, and secondly to show from where philosophy might recover its ground (in an adequate enquiry into the phenomenon of time)

against the *positivum* of the God who is all too readily available to us in His radiant presence). Except that this very approach arises *out* of the very nihilism that ontotheology is (or theo-ontology, or however you construe the claim to have deduced and explicated the essence of the divine). This nihilism at the heart of metaphysics is the very nihilism that Kant employs and puts into service at the heart of his *philosophical* explication of the sublime. I construe Kant's analysis of sublime (or upliftment) 'as the reading-off from beings to being as such is a negating. Upliftment is an instrument of the nihilation of beings, and so, insofar as the gulf that he posits between the world of beings and the ideas is achieved through this nihilation, is a kind of annihilation of beings so that the ideas themselves can be "seen"' (p. 183). God and the gods are in flight from us, a state of affairs that *Postmodernity's Transcending* attempts to take entirely seriously.

We may indeed find ourselves in broad agreement with the account Jonkers gives of Heidegger's understanding of the flight of the gods. But underlying this there are some perplexing confusions, not least Jonkers' consistent employment of the term 'values' in relation to Heidegger's philosophy, despite Heidegger's exorbitant critique of all *Wertphilosophie*, culminating in his devastating critique of values and valuations on his lecture course on Nietzsche of 1940 *Der europäische Nihilismus*.¹ Above all, Heidegger argues that 'however, Nietzsche throughout conceives of nihilism through valuate thinking'.² In a response to a book which centrally asks the question 'how did it come about that God came to be understood as highest value and the value most to be devalued?' may we not question that Jonkers regards values as self-evident philosophical categories, and makes no connection (as Nietzsche so eloquently had) between the *intrinsic* nihilism of valuate thinking and all of our subsequent use of value-language?

Which brings me to my final point. For *Postmodernity's Transcending* seeks to impose a most stringent discipline on its own use of language, in order to show *how* histories are both constructed and imposed on thinking – to show how they emerge, both accidentally and by design through what is said and unsaid – through the unfolding of what the Greeks called λόγος, not only in its most immediate speaking, but also in its history. It is here that I find Jonkers' question concerning my translation of Kant's term *Inbegriff* most perplexing of all. It might possibly be true that my translation 'inner concept' does not translate *very well* the term *Inbegriff*, but Jonkers is simply wrong to say that it does not translate it 'at all'. The term *Inbegriff* has no easy cognate term in English. What my translation seeks to do is connect the term *Inbegriff* to Kant's frequent and technical use of the term *Begriff*, the concept. This is important in *Postmodernity's Transcending* because it illustrates an essential connection between two of Kant's most important works—the first critique, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* and the third (with which *Postmodernity's*

Transcending is intimately concerned), *Kritik der Urteilskraft*.

The word *Begriff* comes from the German verb *greifen*, to grasp. The *Begriff* is therefore the 'thing grasped' by the mind (in the sense that we would also say this in English. A literal rendering of *Begriff* is not 'the grasp' but 'the thing grasped' (what the Greeks would have called the νόημα). Kant's use of the term *Inbegriff*, both in the places I examine it from the Third Critique and elsewhere mean that this term is expressly connected to the sense of a central term of his metaphysics—it is clear that the *Inbegriff* has a relation to the *Begriff*.

In everyday German *Inbegriff* is the 'epitome' or 'quintessence' of something, the most perfect or purest embodiment of whatever it is the *Inbegriff* of. It is sometimes translated from German (exactly as Jonkers translates) as 'sum total' in respect to Kant (this is the English term Norman Kemp-Smith employs in Kant's First Critique).³ As a translation, it represents an interpretation. The translation of *Inbegriff* in this way 'makes sense' of Kant, it allows Kant to be 'got into' English: however, if it makes sense of Kant's text in translation it does not necessarily make sense of what Kant wants to say: and here is the caveat that *Postmodernity's Transcending* constantly sounds. For the book does not concern itself so much with what thinkers said and so thought, as what they spoke and thought *of* or about.⁴ In the First Critique (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*) Kant expressly clarifies the term *Begriff* in relation to the term *Inbegriff*, under the heading 'Concerning the Transcendental Ideal'.⁵ This clarification comes at the end of the section of the impossibility of proofs for God, where Kant replaces what he sees as the necessity for proofs with the critical elucidation of the transcendental ideal: there is, therefore an *explicit* connection in Kant's use of the term *Inbegriff* with the very question of grounds as it relates both to Descartes' assumption that the ground can be reached by a kind of proof, and Kant's replacement of that proof with the transcendental deduction. Jonkers' attempt to set Kant and Descartes at enmity on the question of the 'ultimate foundation of truth' (i.e. the *ground* of truth) with his suggestion that I have made a false claim about the connection between them, is therefore *exactly* posed in this question of the meaning of the term *Inbegriff*.

In the sections in the First Critique where Kant elucidates the meaning of the term *Begriff* with respect to the *Inbegriff* it becomes clear that every concept is a concept insofar as it has a 'share' (the German is *Verhältnis*) in the entirety of possibility of predication, which is 'the *Inbegriff* of all predicates of things overall'.⁶ The *Inbegriff* is in the same place described as 'Bedingung *a priori*' (a priori condition). Later it is clear that the *Inbegriff* is itself an idea—indeed, 'the idea of the *Inbegriff* of all possibility'.⁷ Further on what the *Inbegriff* attempts to name are successively *omniitudo realitatis*,⁸ *ens realissimum*, *ens originarium* and

³ Kemp Smith, N., *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, London, Macmillan, 1976 (1929).

⁴ Here again we see the peculiarity of Jonkers' approach. For he uses as evidence of my 'erroneous' thinking the fact that Kant explicitly disagreed with Descartes—as if this disagreement mattered at all. The question is rather on what their thinking was stood: the subjectivity of the subject.

⁵ Kant, I., *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A572/B600.

⁶ ... jedes Ding noch im Verhältnis auf die gesamte Möglichkeit, als den Inbegriff aller Prädikate

¹ Heidegger understands Nietzsche to triumph in thinking through *essentially* that 'die Wertsetzung selbst im Willen zur Macht verwurzelt ist' ('valuation itself is rooted in the will to power'). Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche: der europäische Nihilismus in Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 48, Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1986, p. 97 (cf. Heidegger, M., *Nietzsche II in Gesamtausgabe*, Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1967 [1961], vol.

ens summum.⁹ The very fact that with each explanation Kant supplies in German for the 'alle Möglichkeit der Dinge' (the first definition of *Inbegriff*) he adds a corresponding Latin one that betrays their Scholastic origin. Each was originally a term to describe the divine essence (exactly as Jonkers says that for Kant it is not). The *Inbegriff* is also described as the 'Urbild' and finally, Kant *retranslates* the term *Inbegriff* to betray its real meaning, saying 'Vielmehr würde der Möglichkeit aller Dinge die höchste Realität als ein Grund und nichts als *Inbegriff* zum Grunde liegen'.¹⁰ The ground *must* be the highest reality and the ground of all things, but this is precisely what *cannot* be demonstrated by a formal proof *even though it must be the case*: the problem here is how to demonstrate that the ground *as a conceptual possibility of the transcendental imagination corresponds to the ground of things 'in themselves'*. This is what Kant, neither here in the First Critique, nor in the Third Critique, nor anywhere else, is ever finally able to solve.

It is clear therefore that, as the 'epitome' it is not the *sum total* in the sense of the entirety or greater whole, but could only be understood as the *sum* in the sense of the 'most', the exemplary. The *Inbegriff* is what is present in every *Begriff*. Insofar as every concept is *at the same time an idea*, so the *idea of the Inbegriff is itself the Idea of ideas*. The *Inbegriff* is therefore what *most* makes the concept determinable, and as this it is indeed, the *inner-possibility* of the possibility of the concept at all: it is what always appears in every concept. In this sense it functions exactly as the term 'being' functioned in Scholastic thought (and for the same reason). The *Inbegriff* is what makes the *Begriff*, the concept, a concept *at all*: it is the undifferentiated possibility in every *differentiated* particularity. It precisely is the inner unity of the 'conceptness' of every concept. It is for this reason that Kant clarifies the meaning of the *Begriff*, the concept, *through* the term *Inbegriff*. The *Inbegriff* shows how all the concepts of every thing relate to each other—it is only in this sense that it is the 'sum', as the possibility of their being-summed.

The explanation of *Inbegriff* we find at this point in the First Critique exactly corresponds to the statement in *Postmodernity's Transcending* explaining the meaning of the *Inbegriff*: 'The *Inbegriff* is the concept that makes every other concept available, the inner unity and exemplar of the concepts themselves. The ground of this unity is the understanding. The teleological character of the power of judgement is of assistance to theology, not because it is part of theology as such, but because it points towards a ground that is occupied over and beyond nature—the divine originator' (p. 170). Hence why the term *Inbegriff* cannot *demonstrate*, but only *point toward* its supposed real grounding in God.

Precisely as this, it is the *objective guarantee of the concept's capacity to represent what it is the concept of*, as the *transcendental ideal of the subjectivity of the conceptness of every concept*. Despite Jonkers' cheery optimism that for Kant 'the ultimate foundation of truth is not God, but the transcendental unity of apperception' as the ground of all things, this really is inaccurate. As Heidegger himself pointed out,

and I have discussed elsewhere, Kant was unable to resolve the unifying ground of God, man (subjective representation) and world, a question that continued to beset him even in the notebooks he prepared at the end of his life and that were published as the *Opus Postumum*.¹¹ For this reason, technically speaking, Kant's discussion of the *Inbegriff* remains ambiguous—is it for him founded in the transcendental unity of apperception, or in God, or world, or freedom, or in what precisely?

Now why is it so important to clarify this with such precision? Is it my pique, at being challenged by Jonkers because he claims my conclusions from my translation of *Inbegriff* are 'basically unfounded'? Pique of this kind is philosophically irrelevant. It is rather much more that he shows how the contemporary philosophy in whose name he says he wishes to speak so often falls adequately to understand the way in which language *thinks*. Which means that because he takes the average, everyday translation of *Inbegriff* which falls into his lap from a translation of 1929, by a translator who happens to need to get a text of Kant's into another language, he ends up *not being able to think what Kant thought of at all*, and so not even to be able to think through a connection between Kant and Descartes. Because Kant 'disagreed' with Descartes, there must therefore be no real connection between what they think. And yet here we see Kant attempting to resolve *the very same question* as Descartes. And here, once again, is postmodernity's fragmentation and devaluation, not just of theology, but of philosophy also.

⁹ Kant, I., *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A578/B606. 'most real being . . . originating being . . . highest being.'